THE SANDMAN UNIVERSE

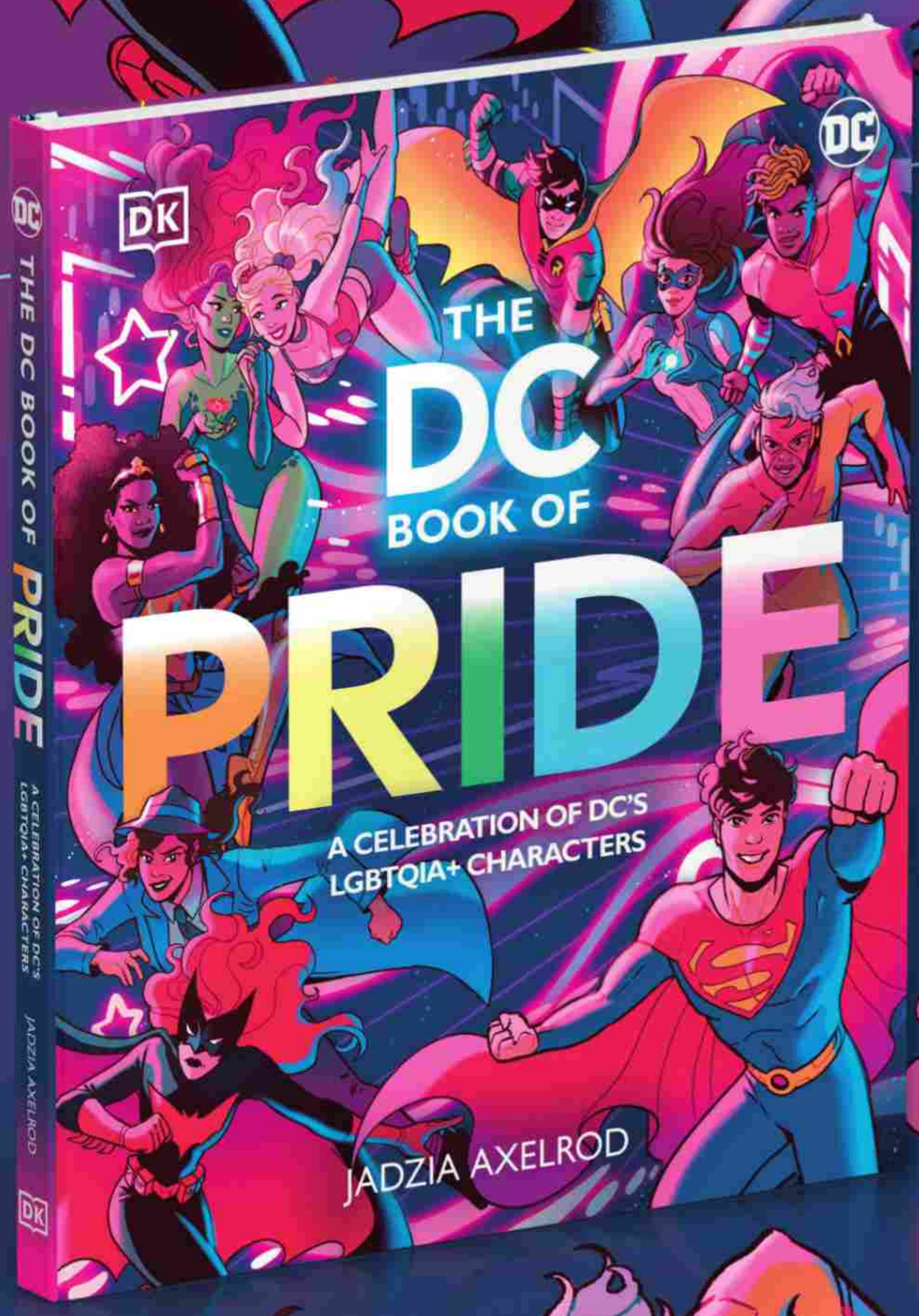
DEAD BOY Detectives

6

Pornsak *Pichetshote*
Jeff *Stokely*
Craig *Taillefer*
Miquel *Muerto*

DC
BLACK LABEL
17+
MATURE

DK



EXPLORE THE RICH HISTORY OF DC'S LGBTQIA+ CHARACTERS!

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN:
THE PLAN

From the journal of Charles Rowland:

We had squooshed away, hoping the monster ghosts would follow us instead of Melvin and Tanya, but there was no way to KNOW--

I don't get it...

--DID they?

...those things are still hanging *around.* Almost like...

...they're being *pulled* to that house.

Groovy. Then they can't *get* us while we find the summoner.

But-- but what if they're going there cuz *that's* where the summoner *is?!*

Huh.

Maybe...

We probably need a *plan.*

Melvi¡i¡i¡innnnn...

OH SHIT-- THE PLAN IS RUN--

THE PLAN IS FUCKING RUN!

The dame we'd stumbled on in the circle said this was all happening cuz one man had a real case of the blues.

The man's daughter had died, and he wanted her BACK.

But because he only SORT OF knew what he was doing...

STAY AWAY-- JUST-- GET OUT!*

*Translated from Thai.

KAAH!

OKAY, JUST--

--wait--

...she came back as a THAI GHOST-- which shouldn't have happened in America.

And the spell did OTHER things too.

The dame said it reached through TIME, sucking in souls LIKE his daughter's-- young ones who died with "extreme unresolved desires."

GET AWAY!

But now the summoner's trying to KEEP his daughter alive, just not as a monster ghost--

--but that only brought MORE monster ghosts.

COME ON-- Please--!

HRRR

Except now...

CHARLES!

ESSSS

It's okay, IT'S OKAY... IT *STOPPED.*

I'm fine?

BUT... *THAT'S* WHAT HAPPENED TO JAI...!

BLAME THE IDIOT *UPSTAIRS.*

WHAT?

THE FOOL *ESCALATED* THE POWERS HE WAS TAPPING INTO.

UNDOING HIS CHAOS-- AND SAVING *YOU* IN TIME-- MEANS *COMPLETELY ERADICATING* EVERY *TRACE* OF HIS MAGIC.

BUT I CAN ONLY DO THAT ONCE I'M *FREE.*

ERADICATE...? COMPLETELY?

YES. DEATH-- LIKE LIFE-- IS BOUND BY *RULES.*

AND DIFFERING *SPIRITS* FROM DIFFERING *REGIONS* ARE GOVERNED BY DIFFERENT *RULES.* IT KEEPS *ONE* CULTURE'S SPIRITS FROM INTRUDING INTO *ANOTHER.*

THIS *CHAOS* IS THE RESULT OF LAWS BEING BROKEN THAT NEED TO BE *FIXED.*

"BECAUSE NOW THE RULES OF THE EAST AND WEST COMPETE FOR SPACE.

"AND THERE ISN'T ROOM FOR *BOTH.*

YOU, BOY, ARE *CORRUPTED* BY THE ENERGY ANIMATING YOUR FRIENDS OUTSIDE. SAVING *YOU* MEANS NEGATING *THEM.*

BUT THEN... WHERE DO *THEY* GO?

WHERE DID *YOU* GO-- *BEFORE* YOU WERE GHOSTS?

Hell?

THEY'D-- THEY'D GO TO *HELL?*

WE-- WE CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN...

THOSE ARE YOUR OPTIONS.

IF YOU SEEK TO EXIST...

...*THEY* CAN'T.

THE SANDMAN UNIVERSE

DEAD BOY Detectives

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variant cover ALEX ECKMAN-LAWN
1:25 variant cover JILL THOMPSON

OUR STORY SO FAR:

After a long search, Edwin Paine and Charles Rowland--
the ghosts of two dead boys who've taken to playing detective--
inadvertently stumbled upon the person who
summoned the many Thai spirits to Los Angeles...
including those whom the boys have befriended.

But the true knowledge of the summoner's
actions seems to lie with his captive--
Thessaly, a three-thousand-year-old witch
who has been working with the
summoner for her own mysterious purposes...

CHAPTER FOURTEEN:
KIDS (PART II)

OKAY, I-- I THINK YOU GOT US =pant= AWAY FROM THEM...

HOW-- HOW COME WE'RE =pant= TIRED?

WE'RE =pant= DEAD!

WHAT FUCKING SHIT IS THIS?!

MELVIN, FOCUS! THE MONSTER GHOSTS ARE EVERY-WHERE--

NOT-- NOT ALL OF THEM... JUST THE SMALL FUCKS CHASING US...

...AND THAT'S ONLY CUZ WE STUMBLED ONTO THEM. THEY'RE NOT HUNTING US...

...NOT LIKE EDWIN AND CHARLES.

WE'RE FINE IF WE STAY OUT OF THEIR WAY AND FIND THE SUMMONER.

AND JUST LET THEM FIND THE BOYS?

LOOK AT WHAT THEY DID TO CHARLES ALREADY!

MAYBE-- MAYBE IF WE DISTRACTED THEM

SO THEY CAN DO THAT TO US?!

BUT--BUT IF THEY'RE HUNTING THE BOYS, WE CAN'T JUST LET THE MONSTER GHOSTS HURT THEM...

...right?

It was MY fault.

Because of ME, Edwin wasn't thinking straight.

EDWIN... WE *KNOW* WHAT TO DO.

WE *DO?*

YES...

WE *LET GO.*

WE'RE HERE CUZ I *COULDN'T* LET GO. OF *CRYSTAL.* BUT...

LOOK AT ME.

EVERY-THING ENDS.

YOU'D THINK *WE'D* KNOW THAT BETTER THAN *ANYBODY.* WE *CAN'T* LET THE LADY OUT OF THE CIRCLE.

BUT SHE SAID YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME--!

IT'S OKAY. DON'T BE SCARED.

WHATEVER HAPPENS NEXT... *HAPPENS.*

From the journal of Edwin Paine:

Charles was being so **BRAVE.**

Like Sherlock Holmes and the Lone Ranger rolled up into one.

I was so **PROUD** *of him. But that* **COULDN'T** *mean he was* **RIGHT?**

PLEASE...! STAY BACK...!

AAAAAHH!

AAAAAHH!

Come on... Follow...

AAAAHH!

Holy crap...

HOLY CRAP...

KRAAAAAH!

...IT'S WORKING. IT'S *TOTALLY WORKING!*

YOU WERE RIGHT! THE SMALL FUCKS JUST ATTACK *ANY* GHOST THEY--

--YOU!

YOU'RE THE *CHEESE WEASEL* THAT SUMMONED US!

YOU *ARE* HERE!

YOU CAN *HELP* US!

I-- I *can?!*

HELP YOU WITH--

NOOOO!

GET THE FUCK AWAY!

...down-- downstairs...

...don't...

What...? WHAT'S DOWN--

OH MY GOD!

THE AMULET!

GRAB!

HEY--! LET GO. LET GO!

No... you can't... Alisa-- she has to...

...please... come back...

HEY...

...I...I READ A *LOT* ABOUT YOUR DAUGHTER-- *ALISA*--OFF HER COMPUTER...

...I *KNOW* YOU GUYS FOUGHT CUZ OF *RYAN*-- THAT BOY YOU DIDN'T LET HER GO OUT WITH-- SO--SO SHE SNUCK, *um*--

--*CLIMBED* OUT AND-- AND *FELL* AND...

SHE *KNOWS*, YOU KNOW?

SHE DOESN'T *HATE* YOU. SHE KNOWS YOU WERE JUST DOING YOUR BEST. SHE'S *SORRY* SHE NEVER SAID IT.

OR IF SHE MADE IT SOUND LIKE SHE'S *ASHAMED* OF WHERE SHE'S FROM.

BUT NOW *PLEASE*-- YOU HAVE TO...

...please...

...let go...

FSSSS

...THE FUCK?!

Did they both just *DIE*-die?

IT'S *TIME.*

THE INSECT WHO SUMMONED YOUR FRIENDS IS *DEAD.*

HE NEEDED TO COMBINE *MY* POWER WITH *HIS* RITUALS TO REVERSE HIS DAUGHTER'S CURSE.

HE WAS TOO *STUPID* TO REALIZE I'VE BEEN EXPLOITING HIS EFFORTS FOR MY *OWN* PURPOSES.

Whoaaaa...

I CAN *FIX* THE RULES HE BROKE, BUT ONLY IF I'M *FREE.*

THAT'S WHY I PULLED YOU HERE.

YOU... *BROUGHT* US HERE?

YES, CHILD. AND NOW-- *CHOOSE.*

YOUR FRIEND IN HERE OR YOUR FRIENDS OUTSIDE. THOSE ARE YOUR ONLY OPTIONS.

WHAT ABOUT DOM AND JAI AT LEAST? OUR *OTHER* FRIENDS. *THEY* DIED. CAN WE BRING *THEM* BACK?

OF *COURSE* NOT.

RESURRECTIONS DON'T SIMPLY *HAPPEN.*

BUT-- BUT THE SUMMONER--

IS *DEAD.* AND LOOK AT THE CHAOS.

IT'S... NOT *FAIR--*

THE *WORLD* WASN'T CREATED FOR THE CONVENIENCE OF *CHILDREN.*

KIDS.

...WHAT?

WE'RE *KIDS.*

NOT *ADULTS.* AND OUR-- OUR *FRIEND* SAID THAT MEANS WE DON'T *AUTOMATICALLY* NOT TRY. BECAUSE WE *WANT* TO *CARE.*

BECAUSE MAYBE *TRYING* TO DO THINGS DIFFERENT'S THE ONLY WAY TO *KNOW* IF THEY *CAN* BE.

IF-- IF THE LAWS AROUND GHOSTS HAVE TO BE *FIXED,* CAN'T THEY BE MADE *FAIRER* THAN BEFORE?

CAN'T THERE BE ROOM FOR *ALL* OF US?

NO.

BUT CAN'T WE *TRY?* CAN'T ANYTHING *CHANGE?* WE'D DO WHATEVER ANYBODY WANTED--

COME-- COME *ON...* WE'VE HAD A *LONG TIME* TOGETHER--

I DON'T CARE! I DON'T WANT ANYONE TO...

...to...

...dash it...

IT'S OKAY...

...YOU'D DO ANY-THING?

ANYTHING.

BECAUSE THE LAWS OF THE WORLD ARE THERE FOR A REASON.

FLYING ***AGAINST*** THEM... LEAVES ***NO*** GUARANTEES.

BUT THERE MIGHT BE A ***SMALL*** CHANCE...

...IF YOU TRUST ME WITH YOUR ***SOULS.***

...WHAT...

...DO YOU ***MEAN?***

AN *AFFECT* COULD BE ADDED TO MY RITUAL, ONE TO *ADJUST* THE RULES GOVERNING GHOSTS IN THE RARE INSTANCES THEY APPEAR.

WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY THAT IN THE *FIRST* PLACE?!

BECAUSE I'D HAVE NO IDEA WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO YOU GHOSTS *NEXT.*

WELL, WE'LL DO IT!

BUT... WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF WE CAN *TRUST* HER-- I MEAN, SHE EVEN *SAID* SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT'D HAPPEN NEXT...

CHARLES... WE'RE *KIDS.*

DO WE *EVER?*

BUT LIKE JAI TOLD US-- THINGS *MUST* BE WORTH *TRYING,* MUSTN'T THEY?

...

OKAY.

THEN PICK UP THE ROCK...

...AND DISRUPT THE CIRCLE.

AND
THEY THOUGHT
THERE'D BE A BIG
BOOM EXPLOSION BUT
HERE WASN'T THEY--THEY
JUST ALL WENT POOF BACK
WHERE THEY CAME FROM BUT
NOT EDWIN OR CHARLES OR
THEIR FRIENDS CUZ--CUZ T
GUESS THEY WEREN'T FULL
MONSTERS LIKE THE--TH
OTHERS BUT NOW
EVERYTHING'S
DIFFERENT

BUT *NOT* KIND OF BUT THEY STILL COULDN'T BRING JAI BACK *SHE*--SHE HAD TO GO AWAY SO THEY GAVE ME BACK MY MAGIC CARD BUT MAYBE SHE'LL COME BACK SOMEDAY *CUZ*--CUZ OF REINCARNY--RE-INCARNASH--REINCARNA

TIMMY...!

WHERE DID YOU *HEAR* ALL THIS?

MY FRIENDS CHARLES AND EDWIN I HIRED THEM CUZ--CUZ THEY'RE DETECTIVES AND THEY FIND THINGS CUZ THEY'RE DETECTIVES AND *THEY*--THEY CAME TO TELL ME

CHARLES AND...?

HONEY, WHAT ARE YOU *POINTING* AT?

CHAPTER FIFTEEN:
THE END?

A LADY AT THE MARKET SAID A *WOLF* ATE HER DOG!

TANYA SAID THOSE *COULD* BE POP GHOSTS.

IS *THAT* ONE THE GHOSTS OF *TERMITES?*

I THINK THAT'S THE PEE, um-- *PHI PLUAK.*

OH, YEAH.

TANYA'D KNOW. THEY SHOULD BE BACK ANY--

OH, HEY, MELVIN!

...Hey.

Charles and I had been SUSPICIOUS but...

...the lady seemed to do everything she PROMISED. Charles was better, Melvin and Tanya were here...

...even though we ALL wished Jai and Dom could be, too.

...PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SAYING ALL THE DOGS WERE *TORN APART!*

THEY THINK IT'S COYOTES. WHAT DO *YOU* THINK, TANYA...?

YOU SAID THE *LADY* SAID SHE *FIXED* THE RULES.

AND-- AND IF ME AND MELVIN ARE STILL HERE, DOES THAT MEAN *OTHER* THAI GHOSTS ARE TOO?

IF IT DOES, SOONER OR LATER PEOPLE'LL START BLAMING THE THAIS IF THEY HURT ANYBODY.

THAT AIN'T KOSHER.

We all agreed it was a mystery that needed solving. A GHOST mystery.

And who better to solve it than four GHOST DETECTIVES?

*After all, Tanya had **REALLY** been studying Dom's journals and was **QUITE** confident now...*

EDWIN, HELP--

*...she'd even started teaching **ME** some.*

But as Tanya's hand squeezed Edwin's, he remembered how his heart **fluttered** when they **first** embraced.

Oh...

How **happy** it made him.

...sure.

For his adventure of the heart to finally arrive.

But though they enjoyed each other's company and discovered how **much** they had in common...somehow, that fluttering **still** faded, the old doubts creeping **back.**

Despite all his pretending otherwise.

Was there something wrong with him?

And as he wondered if he'd **ever** have a true adventure of the heart, another question crossed his mind--

--why did the answer feel closer than it seemed?

Perhaps **that** was **another** mystery. One **waiting** to be solved.

For if these young spirits had learned **anything,** it was that the unknown wasn't necessarily worth **fearing.**

Meanwhile, the witch's plan had **worked.** The one she devised to **exploit** her capture so as to help overcome her **true** obstacle.

Because while the witch had **long** suspected ghosts fell under the purview of more domains than merely **Death's--**

--she'd no **idea** how **unbalanced** those powers must now **be** for her to accomplish what she **had--** to not **bend** the rules, but **break** them so utterly.

Leaving the spirits of the world no longer **bound** by **geography.** Different ghosts could now appear **anywhere--**

--Japanese chochin-obake in Colorado, Western apparitions in Calcutta.

An unforeseen side effect of what the witch **really** wanted--

--unfettered access to the dead's **full** realm. That and **protection--**

--so she could search for the **one soul** who had made her a **target** in the **first** place.

And all that breaking had required was the **willing sacrifice** of **two unsuspecting spirits.**

Because no one was more surprised than **Thessaly** that those naive ghosts had **survived.**

That they somehow had **not** been **obliterated** as she had intended.

It made her **chuckle.** How the spirits' stubbornness aligned with forces outside their grasp. At their **luck--**

--to get **exactly** what they wanted purely because they were **foolish** enough to **ask.**

TOLD YOU KNOCKING OVER THIS PLACE'D BE *EASY--*

But perhaps she shouldn't have been surprised. After three thousand years, she knew-- what else was **growth,** was **change--** but an act of **faith?**

HEY!

GET BACK!

SHIT, MAN. SHE'S SEEN OUR *FACES.* SHE--

Because if the **experienced** were meant to teach the **young** their limits--between innocence and depravity, continuity and conclusion, East and West--

--perhaps the **young** were meant to remind the **experienced--**

...YO, WHAT'S *UP* WITH HER...?

HEY-- *HEY!* I SAID *GET BACK--*

--that life has room enough for **all** of it.

RHAA!

With that, Thessaly did something uncharacteristic. She **smiled.**

Smiled as she took her first step toward answers and uttered--

I CALL UPON THE SPIRIT OF ***MADISON FLYNN.***

Follow Thessaly's trail in THE SANDMAN UNIVERSE: NIGHTMARE COUNTRY - THE GLASS HOUSE

"Good-bye, my friends.
Remember me.
Remember all our sweet years together.
Remember me in the Dream Patrol.
Remember."

RACHEL POLLACK

1945-2023

A TRAILBLAZER AND AN INSPIRATION

TO SAVE THE WORLD, BATMAN MUST INFILTRATE EARTH'S MOST SECURE BASE... THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE.

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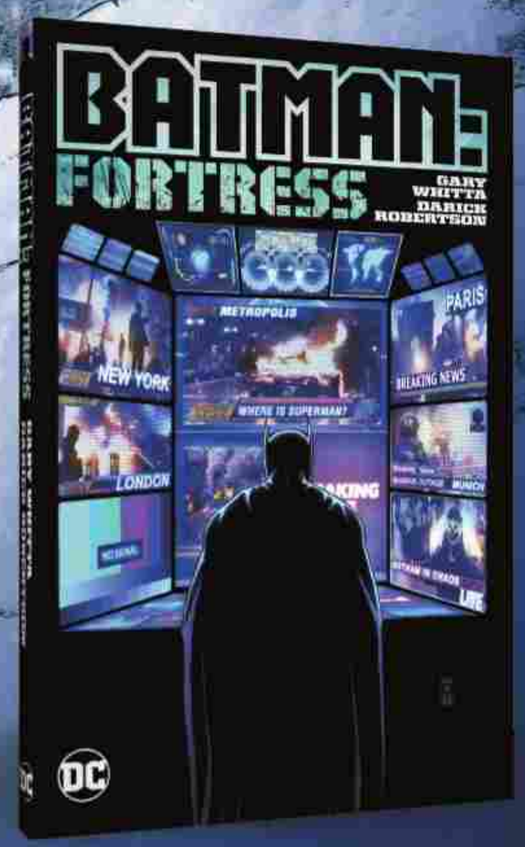

A collection of the bestselling series

Written by *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* screenwriter
GARY WHITTA

Art by the co-creator of *The Boys*
DARICK ROBERTSON

DC

JUNE

DAWN OF DC

DC NATION SPOTLIGHT ON

DC AAPI HERITAGE MONTH

WE ARE LEGENDS

千古傳奇 우린 전설이다 私たちは伝説だ हम है सिकंदर

This May, Dawn of DC expands with the We Are Legends initiative, starring brand-new and compelling Asian heroes! After making their presences known across the DC Universe, these characters embark on can't-miss adventures in three new six-issue series of their own. Here's what to look out for this Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month!

SPIRIT WORLD

Written by ALYSSA WONG 王秀莲
Art by HAINING 海凝

Meet Xanthe Zhou, a Chinese hero with the ability to travel in and out of the Spirit World—the realm of the dead—and that of the living. Their superpower is based on the East Asian custom of burning joss paper at grave sites to send resources to ancestors in the Spirit World, which will come in handy when Xanthe teams with John Constantine to rescue Cassanda Cain from a horde of jiangshi (Chinese hopping vampires)!

THE VIGIL

Written by RAM V
Art by LALIT KUMAR SHARMA

This mysterious team of South Asian metahumans is Arclight, Saya, Dodge, and Castle—a group of individuals given powers they didn't want, determined to stop metahuman research and tech created for military applications at any cost. Along the way, they'll encounter superheroes that could be allies or enemies...which is not a surprise for a group that exists to shut down state-sponsored superhumans and clean up their messes.

CITY BOY

Written by GREG PAK
Art by MINKYU JUNG 정민규

Cameron Kim is just a kid trying to make a living, using his powers of speaking to cities—they appear to him as animal avatars made out of city scraps, with Gotham a rat and Metropolis a dragon—to find lost and hidden goods to pawn. But having these powers also means that this new Korean superhero hears everything about these cities, including their histories and the truths behind them. And the cities may not be too happy with that...

DON'T MISS *SPIRIT WORLD* #1, *THE VIGIL* #1, AND *CITY BOY* #1, ALL ON SALE IN MAY!

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